

Shadows Within

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Shadows Within
> by: Jennifer Hart<h3>

Kimberly Hart stepped off the plane and took a deep breath. She smiled. It felt so good to be home once again. Had it only been two days ago that she had walked into Coach Schmidt's office, tears streaming down her face to announce she was quitting the team and returning to Angel Grove? Quitting had been the third hardest decision she had ever made in her life but she could no longer pretend to be anything more than miserable in Florida. She had given up everything to go train for the Pan Global Games; given up her spot on the Power Ranger Team, her hardest decision ever; given up Tommy, the man she thought she loved more than anything which was the second hardest decision. Because of those sacrifices, she had convinced herself she had to make it big at the Pan Globals despite the bone weary training and crying herself to sleep.

Just when she thought she was going to drive herself crazy being miserable she received a letter that gave her the courage to admit her mistake. The letter was from Billy Cranston, her oldest and dearest friend. He too had left the Power Rangers to make a new life. Only he had left Earth all together to live on Aquitar with his girlfriend Cestria. In his letter, Billy admitted that things weren't

working out like he'd hoped. He and Cestria, it seemed weren't as compatible as he had first thought. He missed all of his friends in Angel Grove but most of all he missed her. He was coming home. That very day Kim made the same decision.

"Kim!" Billy hugged her tightly and kissed her cheek. With a squeal of delight she enthusiastically returned his greeting and then pushed him back so she could get a good look at him. Gone was the small, awkward computer geek who had won his way into her heart with his technobabble and shy clumsiness. In his place was a mature handsome young man.

"Billy, you look great."

In turn, Billy studied her. He wished he could say the same thing about her. Oh, no doubt she was still as beautiful as ever but she was way too thin; he could practically feel her bones when he hugged her. Her eyes were shadowed as if she hadn't gotten enough sleep lately.

"Kim, is everything okay?"

She smiled brightly, linking her arm through his. "It is now that I'm home. Would you believe I've even missed Bulk and Skull?"

Billy laughed. "That's serious homesickness all right. I hope you don't mind, but I didn't tell any of the others you were coming. I wanted it to be a surprise. The others are going to be so happy to see you."

"I've missed them too. The last time I came to town for a visit, Divatox kidnapped Jason and me and tried to feed us to her fiance. That didn't leave too much time for socializing."

As they collected Kim's bags and walked to Billy's car they kept the conversation light. Kim was itching to ask about Tommy and Kat while Billy was equally anxious to find out what had happened in Florida but both teens knew that conversation would be better suited for when they could talk in private.

Five feet from Billy's car, a whole squad of shadow-like creatures appeared. The two teens dropped Kim's bags and assumed a defensive stance. They didn't know who these creatures were but they didn't look friendly. One of the shadow creatures lifted his hand and fired a beam of energy toward Kim and Billy, who in turned tumbled in opposite directions to avoid the beam.

Five creatures surrounded Billy. He put up a good fight. His martial arts skills had improved dramatically since his days as a Power Ranger. Out of the corner of his eye he saw that Kim was in a similar situation. But then one of the creatures lifted his hand and placed it on Kim's chest. As it began to glow, Kim screamed in agony. A second later, she collapsed unconscious.

"Kim!" Billy turned to help his friend but one of the creatures put his hand to his chest. A wall of white-hot pain coursed through his body and then he felt nothing as blackness closed over him.

* * *

Alpha 6 was working at a console when Dimetria gasped. He looked up.
"Ay yi yi, what is Miss D?"

"Alpha, why would I be sensing the presence of Shadowgons? Were they not all destroyed when Corric was defeated? Could he still be alive?"

"Oh dear, I am picking up traces of Shadowgons at the airport. They are attacking two of the former Rangers. Should I call the Rangers to help them?"

"Wouldn't it be unwise to send them to battle creatures they know nothing about? Would you please have the Rangers teleport here at once?"

* * *

Kimberly awoke with a groan. Her whole body hurt. She vaguely recalled the attack at the airport but didn't know how she had gotten from there to this dirty, musty, damp dungeon. She saw Billy lying on the floor nearby and crawled over to him.

"Billy, please wake up."

With a low moan, he opened his eyes. When he saw Kimberly kneeling over him, he sat up and hugged her tightly.

"Are you okay?"

"I've been better. Who were those goons? They were tougher than Putties and Tengu rolled together."

"Thank you my dear. I take that as a compliment."

A man stood outside the cell door. He was tall and mysteriously dark. He smiled but that smile held no warmth or compassion, only evil. Billy put a protective arm around Kim's shoulder.

"Who are you and why have you brought us here?" Billy's eyes narrowed.

The stranger laughed. "I'm hurt that a former Power Ranger doesn't know who I am. Dimetria never questioned of me?"

Kim frowned and leaned close to Billy. "Who is Dimetria?"

"Zordon's replacement. She came after I left for Aquitar but the others told me about her. She only speaks in questions."

"Oh the two of you were Zordon's lackeys. I should have known. I am Corric, Master of Dark and Shadows. You have already met my Shadowgons and have had a small taste of what they are capable of. As for why I have brought the two of you here, I have decided I have left Earth alone for too long. I could have such fun with humans. But I know the Power Rangers protect Earth. Now my Shadowgons could more than take care of them but what fun is that? It would be so much more entertaining to defeat them using someone they trust."

Kim glared at him. "We will never help you."

"Be careful, my dear. Never can be quite a short amount of time. By this time tomorrow at least one of you, if not both, will be my willing servant."

Billy shook his head. "Forget whatever spell you are planning. It won't work."

Corric laughed. "I said willing servant, Ranger. I won't need a spell. They are not very reliable. Shadowgons, come."

Billy and Kim got ready. As soon as he opened the door to let his minions in they would attack. But to their surprise and dismay, he did not open the door. A Shadowgon simply walked through the bars.

"We'll start with the girl."

"Leave Kim alone." Billy stood in front of his friend, blocking the Shadowgon. It did not deter the creature though. It simply raised its hand and a beam knocked him out of the way. He lay where he had fallen stunned as the creature grabbed Kim by the shoulders and pulled her closer.

Kim screamed as the creature seemed to absorb itself into her body. Her eyes flashed to green as she suddenly stopped breathing. Corric grinned.

"You may want to punch her in the stomach to make her start breathing. I would hate for her to die so soon."

Billy couldn't bring himself to hit his friend but he did rise and rush to her. He got her in the Heimlich position and gave her a swift abdominal thrust as if she were choking. Kim drew in a shaky breath and began to scream. She curled up in a ball and continued to scream, obviously in great pain. Billy watched her helplessly and then glared at Corric.

"What is that thing doing to her?"

"Existing inside her. I'm afraid it is quite painful if the person is not willing. I wouldn't touch her if I were you. Any contact will cause her even more pain than she's already in. I think the Shadowgon will remain within her until morning. Then we will talk again."

As Corric left, Billy knelt beside Kim and touched her cheek. She cringed away from him and continued to cry out in pain. Tears filled Billy's eyes as he watched his friend in such distress.

"Kim, I'm so sorry. I wish I could do something, anything." As he watched her writhe in pain and agony, he finally admitted to himself what his heart had long known -- he was in love with her. But would he ever be able to admit it to her? "Be strong, Kim."

* * *

"Any sign of them, Dimetria?" Tommy paced back and forth in the Power Chamber. It had been several hours since Alpha and Dimetria had teleported him and the other Rangers and told them about Corric.

"Wouldn't I have said something if I had, Red Ranger?"

"Why would he take Billy and Kim? They no longer have any power." Kat put a comforting hand on Tommy's shoulder. She knew he was concerned about Kim. She even suspected he was still in love with his former girlfriend.

"Why does Corric do anything? Would you be surprised to know that Corric leaves a wake of destruction wherever he goes?"

"Kim, Billy, we'll get you back. Don't worry." Tommy promised.

* * *

"Did we have a restful night?" Corric appeared at the cell door again.

* Billy jumped to his feet. He knew by his watch that the Shadowgon had been inside Kimberly for ten hours. He didn't know how much more she could take. Her screams had been reduced to raw, husky moans and cries simply because her voice was giving out. Her constant thrashing reminded Billy of someone having a seizure. Billy hadn't slept at all; instead he had remained awake all night watching over her.

"Get that beast out of her, Corric."

The evil Master of Dark laughed. "I'd hardly say you are in any position to order me around, Ranger. But I am about to release her. To be exposed to the Shadowgon much longer would render her useless to my purposes. I should warn you, Ranger; it takes a person twice as long to recover from the effects of exposure and if I were to send a Shadowgon back into her before she fully recovered, the effects would be disastrous. Remember that as you two contemplate weather or not you will help me. Shadowgon, come."

Kim grew still as the dark creature slipped from her body. Billy watched in fear and concern as at first Kim lay there unmoving. But then she began to shake fiercely. Billy knelt beside her and touched her shoulder but that brief contact made her cry out in pain. Billy sat back and turned to glare at Corric but their evil captor was already gone.

"Billy?" Kim's voice was low and raspy. At first he wasn't even sure he had heard her.

"I'm right here, Kim."

"Hold me." She rolled over and looked up at him, pain and fear clouding her features.

Billy wanted nothing more than to gather her up in his arms and hold her, comfort her, assure himself that she was okay. But he knew that doing so would only cause her further pain and that was something he couldn't bring himself to do. He shook his head. "Physical contact will be too painful for you right now, Kim. Rest, let your body recover."

"Don't care about the pain. I need you to hold me, Billy. Please."

Billy needed no further urging. Gently and tenderly, he gathered her up in his arms and pulled her unto his lap. He leaned against the wall as she buried her head in his chest crying. She clung tightly to his shirt as if afraid to let go. For his part, Billy tried to stay as still as possible so as not to cause her any more pain than necessary. He spoke low and reassuringly to her as slowly her shaking ceased. Before long both teens fell into an exhausted sleep.

* * *

Corric smiled as he watched the two teens. He would give them this rest time; it was critical to his plan that they be somewhat rested before he offered them a choice. This was going to be easier than he had first thought. The boy's feelings for the girl were more than obvious and would be simple to manipulate. And after so many hours inside her, his Shadowgon had been able to give him all the information on the former Pink Ranger that he could ever hope for.

"Oh, this will be too easy. Prepare to meet your doom, Power Rangers."

* * *

Billy woke slowly, confused as to why his back was aching. He frowned at the unfamiliar weight in his lap. He looked down and saw Kim sleeping uneasily and remembered what had happened. Kim still had a tight grip on his shirt and was whimpering softly.

He stole a quick glance at his watch and saw they had been asleep for about five hours. If what Corric had told him was true, she still had about fifteen hours before she fully recovered. He hoped Corric would stay away until then but he knew that was wishful thinking.

Kim groaned and slowly opened her eyes. "Billy?"

"Shh, relax, Kim. I'm here."

She realized she had a death grip on his shirt and relaxed it considerably. She didn't completely release her hold, however, almost afraid that if she did he might disappear.

"How do you feel?"

She groaned and shuddered. "Don't ask. Hopefully Tommy and the others will find us before he comes back with his shadow goons."

Billy bit his lip when she mentioned Tommy. He too wanted their friends to rescue them quickly but he wondered if she still had feelings for Tommy. He had been there when Tommy received the letter; had she really found someone else?

"Billy, are Tommy and Kat happy together?"

Her question took him by surprise. "I think so. Of course I haven't been here for awhile but yeah, from the letters I've received from Tommy, I'd say it seems like they are."

"Good, Tommy deserves to be happy. I know I hurt him with that letter

but I couldn't tell him the truth."

Billy shifted and apologized when his movement caused Kim to groan. "What was the truth?"

"I was so miserable in Florida that any tie to Angel Grove hurt too much. I knew that Tommy would stick by me no matter what and I couldn't stand to think he might end up as miserable as I was. I had hoped he and Kat would get together."

Billy released a breath he didn't know he'd been holding. "So there wasn't anyone else?"

"No."

"Unbelievable. You two are facing possible death and you are discussing her love life. Pathetic."

Corric and a couple of Shadowgons shifted through the cell. Billy pulled Kim closer. Against her conscious will, Kim buried her head in Billy's shoulder and began to tremble. Corric laughed. "What's wrong, Pink Ranger? You aren't scared of me, are you?"

"Leave her alone." Billy commanded forcibly.

"There you go again, giving me orders. My Shadowgon is lonely. He wants to be absorbed again. Pink Ranger again, I believe."

The Shadowgon moved toward the teens, its eyes on Kim. Billy jumped to his feet pushing Kim behind him. He winced as she groaned. "Wait, you told me earlier that if she absorbed another Shadowgon before recovering completely the results would be disastrous."

"That is true."

"Then take me instead."

Corric smiled softly. "Are you volunteering?"

"Billy, no!" Kim grabbed hold of his leg.

Billy refused to look at her. "If you will leave Kim alone, then yes, I guess you can say I'm volunteering."

"Then who am I to refuse a willing victim. Shadowgon, proceed."

Billy tensed as the Shadowgon grasped his shoulders. Corric chuckled. "Relax, Blue Ranger. No pain will come to one who willingly accepts the Shadowgon. You'll see."

The Shadowgon seeped into Billy's body. He gasped but didn't feel any pain. Kimberly stared in surprise as Billy's eyes flashed red and he continued to stand.

"Who do you serve?"

"Corric, Master of Dark and Shadows."

Corric knelt beside Kim and caressed her cheek. "You see my dear, I

was right. Already one of you is my willing servant."

Kim rose weakly to her knees, her eyes flashing. "You tricked him."

"Not so. He willingly accepted the Shadowgon into his body. He could have let him enter you again but his love for you wouldn't allow that. His love for you turned him over to me. Thank you."

"Billy, fight it. Don't let him control you. Please, Billy."

"Save your breath. Once the Shadowgon enters anyone, willing or unwilling, they remain within until it chooses to leave and I alone command that. He's mine now and soon you will be too. Rangergon, come. I'm sending you down to battle the Rangers. I'll be back for you, Pink Ranger."

* * *

"Ay yi yi, Billy is in the park and he's attacking people."

The Turbo Rangers turned to the viewing globe in surprise. Sure enough, Billy was shooting beams of energy at the crowds gathered. Adam frowned. "Corric must have put him under a spell."

"Corric doesn't put people under spells. That's not how he works." Alpha continued to punch in buttons on the console. The Rangers turned to Dimetria for an explanation.

"Do you remember the Shadowgons I told you about? Did I mention they can absorb themselves into a person's body? Would it surprise you to know that they can only turn an absorbed person evil if that person willing agreed to the absorption."

"Billy would never willingly turn to the side of evil." Tommy was adamant.

"Can you not think of any reason Billy would do this?"

"If he had to in order to protect Kim he would." Kim looked at the others who nodded in agreement.

"Come on, gang, we have to get down there and save him." Before Dimetria or Alpha could say anything else the Rangers teleported out. Alpha looked up at Dimetria. "Oh dear, Lady D, they don't know that the Shadowgon won't leave Billy unless Corric commands it. That or either Corric or Billy is destroyed."

* * *

Kimberly gathered up all her slowly regained strength and moved about the cell looking for some way out. It was her fault that Billy was now evil. She owed it to him to help free him.

"Going somewhere, Pink Ranger?"

She glared at him. "You won't get away with this, Corric. The Rangers will save Billy and then they'll rescue me."

"Hold on to your dreams, little girl, because they are all you have

left. You know, I learned a lot about you from my Shadowgon. Your love for the former Blue Ranger left him vulnerable."

"I don't love Billy. He's just my friend."

"Lie to yourself if you must but you can't lie to me. I've seen the truth. Though you've refused to admit it to yourself, your feelings for the Blue Ranger are far more powerful than what you felt for the Green/White/Red Ranger. Maybe I should bring him up here and test his feelings for you."

Kim looked down, ashamed at the tears running down her cheeks. "No, leave him alone."

"Then you will be my second Rangergon."

"You can't trick me like you tricked Billy. I will not agree to be absorbed."

"But absorption will take place regardless." He took her chin in his hand and squeezed tightly. "You have yet to even reach the halfway point in your recovery from the first taste of my Shadowgon. To unwillingly take in another one at this point could kill you."

"Then that is what will have to happen."

"Then Blue Ranger's sacrifice will be in vain. Poor Blue Ranger."

"The longer I resist you the better chance my friends have of freeing both of us."

"You won't live to see that happen, Pink Ranger."

Kim tensed herself as the Shadowgon melted itself into her body. Once again, intense agony flowed through her like hot lava. The pain was so intense her body forgot how to breathe. With an evil chuckle, Corric balled up his fist and brutally punched her in the ribs. Kim gasped in pain but began breathing once again. Collapsing to the floor, she began to convulse from the trauma.

Corric watched her until a Shadowgon appeared beside him. Corric smiled again. "Splendid. The Rangers are trying to stop my Rangergon. I shall return, Pink Ranger."

Through her pain, Kim watched him leave. "Please Tommy, save Billy. I can take it if I die as long as Billy is freed."

* * *

On Earth, the Rangers were taking a beating. Every time one would approach Billy, he would blast them with an energy beam. Fortunately, their suits protected them from the worst effects from the blasts. Finally Tommy was able to slip around behind him and grab him, pinning his arms harmlessly to his side.

"Snap out of it, Billy. We are your friends. You are not evil."

"I serve Corric, Master of Dark and Shadows. Release me and feel my

wrath."

Tommy grunted as Billy tried to free himself. "No, Billy. Come on, Bro. We need your help to find Kim."

"Kim." Billy's voice was low. For a moment Billy's eyes returned to normal and he quit struggling. He seemed to be listening to someone inside himself.

The Rangers held their breaths. Was the spell broken? Tommy, however, didn't release his hold, even when Billy began to tremble.

"Kim's hurt."

"Then help us free her, Billy." Kat pleaded.

But then his eyes flashed red again. "My master has ordered me to bring the Red Ranger to him."

Before Tommy could do anything, he disappeared along with Billy. They reappeared in the dungeon. Billy pushed Tommy aside and stared down at him. "Corric will be here presently."

A muffled whimper drew Tommy's attention to the corner. He gasped when he saw Kimberly sprawled out on the floor, barely moving. He rushed to her side. Her face was contorted in horrific pain and her body was quivering, too weak to and exhausted to produce any more movement than that.

"Kim! Billy, you have to help me. Come on, Bro."

Billy stood over them, his face a mask of indecision. A small corner of his mind that the Shadowgon within him had not invaded was outraged and scared. That part of his mind knew the danger his friend was in and knew he had to do something fast. "Step away from her."

The voice Billy used was the same malice filled one he had used on Earth and Tommy refused to obey. Billy raised his hand and sent a small blast in Tommy's direction. The blast was just enough to send him sprawling away without hurting him.

As soon as Tommy was out of the way, Billy knelt beside his friend and placed a hand on her chest. His hand began to glow. Tommy cried out for him to stop. He was about to rush Billy when he noticed Kimberly had grown still and calm. As Billy's hand continued to glow, Tommy saw the Shadowgon leaving Kim's body. But he also saw that Billy seemed to be weakening.

"What are you doing?!" Corric screamed from the cell door.

Billy collapsed on top of Kim. Without another thought, Tommy put a hand on both friends and teleported out. As they started fading out, Tommy could hear Corric screaming in protest.

* * *

Billy awoke with a groan. He was lying on a cot in the Power Chamber. Justin and Tanya were watching him. "What happened?"

He slowly rose and accepted the glass of water Tanya offered him. Justin looked at him in concern. "We were hoping you could tell us. According to Tommy, you saved Kim but collapsed right after."

"How is Kim? Where is she?"

Tanya glanced at Justin before answering. "She's really weak. We transported her to the hospital and while morphed told the doctor what we knew. After demorphing, Tommy, Kat and Adam returned to the hospital to stay with her."

"I have to see her." He stood but it was clear he wasn't yet steady on his feet. Justin and Tanya supported him.

"Not so fast, Billy. Dimetria wants to ask you some questions."

"Later. Right now, I'm going to check on Kim with or without your help."

* * *

* Less than ten minutes later, Billy walked into Kim's hospital room. He paused in the doorway and took a moment to study his friend. She was unconscious but obviously still in a lot of pain. Tommy was sitting on the bed beside her, caressing her cheek. Kat was standing behind him holding Kim's hand. Adam was on the other side of the bed holding her other hand. All three of them seemed oblivious to the fact they were causing her more pain.

"Guys?"

Tommy turned around and smiled when he saw Billy standing there. "Hey, Bro. Glad to see you up and around without red eyes. How do you feel?"

"Surprisingly well. Apparently only a forced entry drains a person's energy. When I released the Shadowgon inside Kim, it caused a momentary drain on me as it destroyed the Shadowgon within me." He remembered how Kimberly had wanted him to hold her despite the pair of physical contact so he didn't say anything about the pain they were causing her.

"How long will it take for Kim to recover?" Kat wanted to know.

"I'm not sure. After the first time, Corric told me that for how ever long the person had been absorb it took twice as long for a full recovery. But he also said that a second unwilling absorption before the recovery period was up could be disastrous, so I'm not sure."

With a low moan, Kim pulled her hands free and curled away from the Rangers' touch. Billy was only slightly surprised. Seeing their hurt expressions, he explained about the sensitivity to physical contact. All three looked concerned to know they had unintentionally been hurting her.

Suddenly, Tommy's communicator chirped. "Go ahead, Alpha."

"Ay yi yi, Corric has sent Shadowgons to the park. Tanya and Justin are already there but they need help."

"We're on our way. Billy?"

"Go on. I'll stay with Kim. Good luck."

As the Rangers teleported out, Billy eased into the chair Adam had left. He watched his best friend sleep for several minutes before noticing that even unconscious, Kimberly had reached her hand out to him. Not wanting to hurt her, he let his own hand hover just above hers. After a couple of seconds, she had a tight clasp on his hand and he realized she was sleeping easier.

* * *

* For the next week, Kimberly continued to sleep. The doctors could find nothing physically wrong with her but she wouldn't wake up. Billy left her side only when he was forced to. It had escaped no one's notice that while Kim still winced and pulled away from contact with any of them, she seemed to seek out Billy's touch whenever he was in the room with her.

Corric was still sending Shadowgons down to battle but the Rangers were holding their own. They hoped he would soon lose interest and leave them alone. Unfortunately, so far he was showing no signs of obliging them.

One afternoon after such an attack, Tommy stepped into Kim's room. Billy was asleep in his chair, his head resting on her bed. Kim still had her tight grip on his hand. It took him a moment to realize she was half-awake watching Billy as he slept.

"Hey, Beautiful. Welcome back." He spoke softly enough not to disturb Billy.

Kim looked up and smiled wanly. It was obvious she was still weak but at least she was conscious. "Hi yourself."

Tommy crossed the room and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek. He missed the grimace of pain that flitted across her features. "You know, there was a time when that was my job." He nodded toward Billy's hand encased in hers.

Kim bit her lower lip. "I'm sorry, Tommy. I never wanted to hurt you. I know that letter was taking the coward's way out but I couldn't think of anything else. I really hope you are happy with Kat."

"I am. Do you love him?"

"There was no him, Tommy. I made up that story because I couldn't tell you how miserable I was in Florida."

"I meant Billy. You've been out for a week and he's the only one you've let touch you."

Kim blushed. She looked down at her best friend and felt her heart beat a little faster. "Yeah, I think I do. I didn't realize it until Corric pointed it out to me while he was trying to get me to willingly take a Shadowgon, but yeah. If I'm honest with myself I'd

have to admit that part of me always has. I doubt he feels the same way though."

Tommy smiled. "Don't count on it. Seeing you in pain helped him defeat the Shadowgon inside him. Not to mention that he's barely left your side since we rescued you. If I was to make bets, I would bet that he loves you too."

"Are you mad?"

"Nah, Billy is a great guy. Both of you deserve to be happy."

A single tear ran down her cheek. "Part of me will always love you."

"Same here. You never truly get over your first real love no matter no matter what happens. But I'm happy with Kat now and I think you can be really happy with Billy. Why don't you get some rest? The two of you are going to have a lot to talk about later."

Kimberly was already asleep before he left the room. Brushing back a tear of his own, Tommy left the hospital room.

* * *

* Billy pulled into a parking place at the juice bar. He turned to look at Kim who smiled at him. He blushed slightly. He couldn't believe she was in love with him. In the two days since she woke up, they had talked a great deal. Both were surprised and thrilled to know the other felt the same way.

"Well, I guess we should go in. Are you sure you feel up to this?"

"Yeah, I feel like I've been cooped up for too long. But we can always leave early if you want to take a long walk later."

Billy blushed again. "I'd like that."

They got out of the car and walked toward the Juice Bar. Billy put a casual arm around her shoulder thrilled to be able to do so. He hid a smile as they walked in.

"SURPRISE!"

Kim jumped as all of her old friends cried out to her. She saw the decorations and sign that said "Welcome Home, Kim!" hanging over the bar. She smiled as she realized she had been set up. She looked at Billy and saw the Cheshire cat smile.

"Did you know about this?"

"Affirmative. Kat and Tanya have been planning this since you woke up. Are you mad?"

"At you? Never. But this doesn't change the fact that I want to be alone with you later."

Billy kissed her on the cheek softly. "Count on it."

She was then swept up in a sea of hello's and welcomes. She had never been so glad to be somewhere in her whole life. The misery she had faced in Florida seemed to be a dim memory.

It was a couple of hours later before she and Billy were able to slip out the back and walk toward the park. Settling on a park bench, Billy kissed her softly on the lips. Kim cuddled against him.

"Corric is so evil and I hate what he did to us but in a way, I'm grateful. Without him, we may not have ever realized how we feel about each other."

"We would have eventually. I'm just relieved that Corric has terminated his attempts to conquer the Rangers."

"Let's not talk about Corric anymore."

* * *

* "Enjoy your time together while you can Pink and Blue Rangers because I'm far from being through with you. I'll bide my time and when you least expect it I'll attack again."

He was seething with hate for the two former rangers. She had resisted him and refused to surrender herself. As for the boy, he had broken free of his control and saved the girl. Both would have to pay for their transgressions. A shiver of anticipation rippled up his back.

"Soon, very soon, Rangers, you will be mine."

End
file.